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# OUR HINDU FRIENDS

*By*

C. A. KINCAID, C.V.O., I.C.S.

(RETIRED)

*Officier de l'instruction publique*



BOMBAY:  
THE TIMES OF INDIA PRESS

1930



TO  
RAO BAHADUR R. R. KALE,  
B.A., LL.B., M.L.C.

In memory of old and honoured Friendship.



## BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Deccan Nursery Tales ..	<i>Macmillan &amp; Co.</i>
History of the Maratha People .. .. .	<i>Oxford University Press.</i>
The Indian Heroes ..	<i>Do.</i>
Tales from the Indian Epics .. .. .	<i>Do.</i>
Tales of King Vikrama ..	<i>Do.</i>
Tales of the Saints of Pandharpur ..	<i>Do.</i>
Tales of Old Sind ..	<i>Do.</i>
The Anchorite .. ..	<i>Do.</i>
Tales from the Indian Drama .. .. .	<i>Do.</i>
Teachers of India ..	<i>Do.</i>
Shri Krishna of Dwarka ..	<i>Taraporewala &amp; Co.</i>
The Tale of the Tulsi Plant .. .. .	<i>Do.</i>
Folk Tales of Sind and Guzarat .. .. .	<i>Do.</i>
The Hindu Gods and how to recognise them ..	<i>Times of India Press.</i>
Our Parsi Friends ..	<i>Do.</i>





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## INTRODUCTION

THE following story is told of one of the recent Popes. An American Catholic came to the Vatican and in reply to His Holiness' enquiry said that he intended to stay only three days in Rome. His Holiness exclaimed "Fortunate man! You will see then everything!" A little later a second American visitor appeared, who informed the Pope that he would stay three weeks in Rome. His Holiness smiled and said "Ebbene! you will see a good deal of our city." In the course of the day a third American visitor was ushered in. He announced that he would stay six months in Rome. His Holiness said with a melancholy smile: "Then I am afraid, my poor friends, you will see next to nothing!"

The above story might well be told of India. Miss Katharine Mayo, an American visitor, who passed a cold winter in India, felt herself competent to write a book, covering the whole of the sub-continent. After a residence of thirty-five years, I dare not attempt to describe more than the customs of a few educated communities in a single portion of a single province.

I have called my book "Our Hindu Friends;" but although much of it applies to most orthodox Hindu communities, it must be deemed to have special reference only to the Brahmans and Prabhus of the Deccan. I have tried in the following pages

to describe the ordinary practices and observances of a clean-living and austere people. The Abbé Dubois did his best to depict the Brahmans of Madras as a lascivious and dissolute body. Miss Mayo went a step further and claimed that all Hindus were lascivious and dissolute. The high castes of the Deccan are, at any rate, nothing of the kind. The ordinary Brahman youth, married as he is at 19 or 20, far more often enters wedlock a virgin than a young Englishman or a young American. Economic reasons compel the latter to marry late and in the meantime they not unnaturally substitute temporary for permanent alliances. Again in India the harlot class is usually recruited from the lowest castes ; and sexual connexion with an untouchable girl would fill the most virile Brahman youth with nausea.

Apart from the clear advantage to be gained by knowing the beliefs and customs of a land wherein one's life is spent, there is a special reason why my countrymen, especially those learned in Greek and Latin, should be interested in Hinduism. The gods and goddesses of India are the brothers and sisters of those whom the inhabitants of Great Britain worshipped during the Roman occupation. If we go back to the second century after Christ, we find three great sister Aryan religions. Hellenism held sway over western Europe and the Mediterranean basin. Mazdaism, or as it is popularly called, Zoroastrianism, was the religion of western Asia. Hinduism was the faith of India. All three religions were at least a thousand years old and were closely allied. Varuna, the Hindu

god of the sea but at one time god of the sky, was the same word as Ouranos, the Greek word for Heaven. Brihaspati, the Guru of the gods, was the same as Diauspitar or Zeus. Ahura Mazda, the All wise deity of the Persians, was the same as Asura, the malignant demon of the Indians. The devs or gods of India were the devils of the Persians.

Let us, however, skip four centuries. We shall find that Hellenism has been completely overthrown. Christianity, an offshoot of Judaism a Semitic faith, has taken its place. The gods of Greece have become a byword and a laughing stock. Now let us skip over another five centuries and we shall find that a similar fate has overtaken Mazdaism. It has been ousted by another Semitic faith, Islam. Of all Zoroaster's millions of followers only our friends the Parsis of Bombay and Guzarat remain. Of the three great Aryan faiths, Hinduism has alone survived. Englishmen, as Aryans, should be profoundly interested in it. Nor can it be said that Hinduism is in a state of decrepitude. It has, it is true, been influenced both by Christianity and by Islam. Nevertheless it is still in the full vigour of its eternal youth. Its followers number to-day three hundred millions. Such a religion, to use the words of Bacon, is "worthy a wise man's consideration."

It is always difficult for a foreigner, however hard he may strive, to avoid grotesque blunders, when discussing alien thought and customs. I can assure my Hindu readers that I have done

my best to be accurate. My old and valued friend, the Sardar V. N. Mutalik, than whom none is more competent, has read over my little book, chapter by chapter, and has given me the most valuable advice. I have derived great help from Sir James Campbell's Gazetteer, a little read work of vast erudition. Nevertheless even so, errors may well have crept in. If they have, I shall be greatly obliged if readers will address me on the subject c/o "Times of India Office" and I shall try to make the necessary corrections in the second edition, should there be one. I apologise beforehand for any offence, that any phrase of mine may give. The Hindu public will, I feel sure, accept my assurance that any such offence is unintentional.

Lastly I have to thank my talented friend Mr. Kelkar for the admirable pictures that he specially drew for my little book.

## THE BRAHMAN OF THE DECCAN.

### I. Birth, and Boyhood.

The Marathi-speaking Brahman of the Deccan begins his life as everybody else does, at the beginning. Like Monseigneur le Duc d'Almaviva, he takes the trouble to be born; but a Brahman baby's birth is a far more complicated affair than that of a French or English baby. For her first confinement the baby's mother usually goes to her parents' house. Just before her delivery she is put into a warm room, of which all the windows have been closed. A midwife is sent for and while the young wife is enduring her labour pains, the family priest reads verses from the Vedas or the Puranas (the Gospels and the Epistles) to drive away evil spirits, who are always on the look-out to do mischief. As soon as the child is born, it is laid in a winnowing fan and mother and child are bathed in hot water. A fire is kept burning in the room; myrrh incense is burnt and an iron bar is placed across the threshold of the mother's room.

In the meantime a messenger has been hastening to the house where the husband is waiting to hear the good news. Directly he is told, he goes at full speed to the house of his wife's parents to perform the Jatkarma or birth ceremony. The women's hall has already been arranged for it. A square has been drawn with quartz powder and



inside the square two wooden stools have been set. The father bathes in water in which a gold ring has been dropped. He dons a rich silk waistcloth, bows before the house gods and the elders and sits on one of the stools. He takes a little water in the palm of his right hand and throws it on the ground. He says aloud : " I throw this water to cleanse the child from the impurity of its mother's body." The mother is then brought in with the baby in her arms and is seated on the second stool. Blessings are called down on the day, the mother and the good spirits, who bring happiness. The father takes a gold ring and through it lets fall a drop of honey and ghee into the child's mouth. He presses the ring against both its ears, smells its head three times, repeats some holy verses and withdraws. The midwife cuts with a knife the umbilical cord and buries it outside the house. The father returns, sprinkles water on his wife's right breast and she may now for the first time suckle her baby. Money is distributed to the Brahmans present and the birth ceremony is over.

Five days pass and the important sixth evening arrives. This night is full of danger to the child. At any moment evil spirits may burst into the house and take the child's life. Every precaution, therefore, has to be taken. The most important is the Shashti Pujan or the worship of the goddess Shashti or Sixth, who presides over this day. Some aunt or other elderly lady of the family draws six red lines on the wall in the mother's room. Near the lines, but on the ground she draws a square

and inside it puts a stool. On the stool she arranges six heaps of rice with a betelnut on the top of each heap. The heaps of rice are for Shashti and her five companions—Jivanti, Kuhu, Raka, Sinivali and Skanda; the betelnuts indeed represent the six goddesses. They are all in turn worshipped by the ladies of the house. After these ceremonies Shashti may be assumed to have been won over to the baby's cause; and she and her companions may be counted on as allies in a fight against evil spirits. Still it is better to settle a dispute than to fight it; so every effort is made to appease the enemy. Some cooked rice on a plaintain leaf is sprinkled with mustard seed, pulse and red powder and carried to the corner of the street. An evil spirit is like a man in this, that he is usually in a better temper after his dinner. Nevertheless nothing must be left to chance; and all night long a Brahman repeats sacred verses or reads passages from the Hindu scriptures to drive away the spirits, while the women of the house sing, play and talk all night, so that they at least may not be caught napping, should the dreaded demons force an entry.

The family, in which a baby has been born, is considered impure for ten days. On the tenth day is held a big purification ceremony. The mother is bathed, the walls of her room are cowdunged and her bathroom is carefully washed, adorned with red powder, flowers and a lighted lamp. A present of money, rice, a bodice and a sari complete the ceremony and the family is deemed duly purified.

Important events, however, follow each other closely at this stage of Baby's life. Two days later his ears must be bored, otherwise he would grow up an "avindhya" or a man with unpierced ears—a contemptuous epithet for Musulmans. Again the mother sits on a stool within a square drawn on the ground. A goldsmith comes and squatting in front of the mother, pierces first the right ear and then the left ear. If a vow, as sometimes happens, has been made to ensure the boy's birth, the goldsmith must bore a hole also through the boy's right nostril and put a ring in it. His work done, the goldsmith packs up his two gold wires, takes his fee, which may be as high as a new turban or as low as a single pice. The father, mother and child are then bathed.

Baby, however, has as yet no name so the same day that his ears are pierced, he is given one. The family astrologer presents himself. Some rice grains are spread on a silver plate. The astrologer puts Baby's horoscope prepared by him at home, in front of the silver plate. The horoscope contains four names from which the father chooses one. The astrologer then reads out the horoscope and calls a blessing on the child's head, saying "May the child live to a good old age!" Baby has now a name like everybody else.

When Baby is between three and four months old, he must be presented to the Sun. On some lucky day chosen by the family priest and then blessed, the mother with Baby in her arms, goes

out of the house followed by her husband. She holds the boy up, so that the Sun-god cannot help seeing him and prays to him to guard her boy. So that the village god may not be jealous, the father and mother walk to the temple, introduce their son to the village god also and give him a packet of betelnut and a cocoanut and beg him to be kind.

On their return home the father puts a gold or silver cup, containing milk, sugar, curds, honey and butter on a wooden stool and arranges in front of the cup fifteen little heaps of rice and on each heap a betelnut. The betelnuts represent Bhumi (Earth), Chandra (the Moon), Surya (the Sun), Shiva, Vishnu and the ten Dishas or directions. The father worships them, puts a gold ring in a cup and drops through it a drop of the mixture into the child's mouth. But Baby's trials are not yet over. Since he has been presented to the Sun and has thus won the Sun-god's goodwill, the day is thought suitable for a choice of a profession. A carpet is spread; on it are put some carpenter's tools, some bits of cloth, a pen, an inkpot and paper and some jewelry. Baby is set down near them; and the first thing at which he clutches, determines his profession. If he grabs the tools, he must be a carpenter, if the cloth a tailor, if the jewelry a goldsmith. By some strange coincidence or perhaps skilful management, a Brahman baby never clutches at anything but the pen or inkpot or paper.

Baby's first birthday is an even greater event east than west. In England it will be celebrated,

by a birthday party, wherein a sugarcoated cake with one lighted candle on it will figure prominently. In India Baby's birthday is observed with greater pomp and circumstance. The usual square is drawn on the floor and in the square two stools are placed for the father and mother. In front of them a third stool is put, but it is reserved for divine guests. Eighteen little rice heaps, with a betelnut on the top of each, are set on the third stool. The first betelnut stands for the Kuldevata or the family god. The second stands for the Janma nakshatra devata or god of the birth star. Two betelnuts stand for the father's deceased parents. The remaining fourteen stand for an equal number of holy sages or heroes.\*

The father and mother, with the child in its mother's arms, sit on the two stools and a married man marks the child's brow with red powder. The parents bow to the older relatives and then worship the eighteen betelnuts and beg them to grant their son a long life. A little milk mixed with molasses and sesamum seed is given to the little boy to drink. The Brahmans get their fees and Baby is put back into his cradle.

Baby next has to have his head shaved. This may take place in the first year, but usually takes place in the second, third or fifth year. Father, mother and Baby are dressed in their best clothes

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\* They are Ashvatthama, Bali, Bibhishan, Bhanu, Hanuman, Jamadagni, Kripacharya, Markandeya, Prajapati, Prahlad, Ram, Shashti, Vighnesh and Vyasa.

and sit in a line inside a traced square. The Brahmans call down blessings on the day, the sacrificial fire is lit, his maternal uncle takes Baby on his lap and a barber shaves his head except the top-knot. Baby is bathed, ashes from the sacrificial fire are rubbed on his brow and the ceremony ends with a feast to the Brahmans.

Baby in spite of all these ceremonies is not yet a Brahman. To achieve the dignity of a Brahman's estate, he must be girt with a sacred thread between the age of seven and ten. In fact he must now no longer be called a baby, but a lad. This threadgirding is a very important ceremony indeed, and in a great measure corresponds with the Christian confirmation. Before his confirmation the young Englishman is not a full member of the Christian church. Before he is girt with the sacred thread, the young Brahman is not a full member of the Brahman community. He is in fact a Sudra and is not allowed to dine with his father or other adult male relatives.

When the Brahman lad has reached a suitable age, his father goes to the house of the family astrologer and asks him to fix a lucky day for girding the boy. The astrologer puts on a wise expression, consults his mystical almanac and names a day; but it is not every day that is suitable. The day must fall in one of the five auspicious months, in which the sun is moving northwards towards the Ecliptic. The time of day must be between six a.m. and noon, since that is the most fortunate part of the twenty-four hours.

The day and the hour fixed, friends and relations must be personally summoned, if possible. In the term friends, the kindly gods are included. Thus first the boy's parents ask the household gods to attend the ceremony. Next, they go, accompanied by as many relations as live in their house, and with drummers and reed players, to the temple of the village god and beg him to attend also. Afterwards the procession goes in turn to the houses of the boy's human relatives and friends and, if possible, secures from them promises to be present. To relatives living at a distance, invitation cards (*lagna-chitia*) are sent by post.

On the morning of the ceremony is held the preliminary mother's feast (*Matribhojan*). Twelve wooden stools are set in a row and twelve unmarried but threadgirt Brahman boys sit on them. At one end of the row the boy and his mother eat together off the same plate. Let them make the most of this meal. This is the last time that they will dine together. After the *Matribhojan* the boy goes to his father and takes from him twelve silver coins and gives one in turn to each of the Brahman boys.

It is now the barber's turn. He shaves the boy's head and then hands him over to be bathed, perfumed, dressed in rich clothes and covered with garlands. The family priest takes him by the arm and presents him to the household gods to whom he offers a packet of betelnut. Then the boy bows to his parents and all his elder male

relatives. Lastly he goes outside and bows to all Brahmans in general.

When he re-enters the house, he takes his seat on a wooden stool, heaped with rice. On a similar stool but without the rice his father sits. Some male relatives hold between the boy and his father a cotton sheet, while the astrologer repeats *Mangal-ashtakas* or lucky verses. Suddenly the cloth is pulled aside, the boy gives a cocoanut to his father and lays his head on his father's feet. In return the father blesses his son; the guests shower rice on him and the musicians outside, who have been silent, make as much noise as possible. A fire is lit, which the priest blesses, and butter, rice and sacred grass are thrown into it. All is now ready for the thread-girding.

The priest hangs the sacred thread or Janve over the boy's left shoulder. The boy takes his seat on a wooden stool facing the east or the sunrise. In front of him are placed a metal waterpot, a plate and a ladle with which the boy takes three sips, repeating sacred verses. The father takes the boy by the hand and they walk outside and bow to the sun. They re-enter; three times the father takes in his hollowed hands some water, a betelnut and a silver coin and drops them into his son's hollowed hands. The son lets them drop upon the ground. The boy tells his father that he wishes to become a Brahman and to learn the Gayatri Mantra.\* The

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\* The Gayatri Mantra is an invocation to the Sun-god. It runs as follows :—

“Om ! Earth ! Sky ! Heaven ! Let us think of the Sun's adorable light : may it enlighten our minds.”



father covers himself and his son with a shawl and everyone present walks away, so as not to hear. The father whispers into the boy's ear the Gayatri Mantra three times and the latter repeats it. The priest invokes blessings on the lad's head and ties a grass string or munj (which gives its popular name to the ceremony) with three knots round the boy's waist. In his hand the priest puts a "dand" or staff of the same height as the boy into his hand and advises him always to carry it. Then the father says solemnly "My son, up to this time you have been a Sudra, now you are a Brahman and a Brahmachari, *i.e.*, a Brahman student. When you go out, you must behave with religious exactness; you must bathe three times a day, pray, keep alight the sacred fire, beg, keep awake during the day and study the Vedas."

Since the boy has become a Brahman student, he is supposed to earn his livelihood by begging. Then he is supposed to return to his father's house (the samavartan). He is again shaved by the family barber. He is dressed in a waistcloth. The old munj or grass thread is taken off and he is invested with fresh sacred threads. He is dressed no longer as a begging Brahman but after the manner of a Brahman gentleman, *i.e.*, with coat, shoes and turban. In his left hand is put an umbrella and instead of the staff, a bamboo stick is placed in his right hand. Over his shoulders is thrown a scarf. The occasion is deemed suitable for good advice; so the priest exhorts him "never to bathe in the evening, never to look at naked women,

not to commit adultery, run, climb a tree, go to a well or swim in a river." Last of all the priest announces "Till now you have been a Brahmachari, now you are a *snatak* or householder."

But a householder needs a wife ; so a charming comedy ensues. The boy pretends to pack up some provisions in a waistcloth and declares that he is going to Benares. He goes to the village temple, accompanied by relatives, friends and a band and offers a cocoanut to the god. Suddenly his maternal uncle asks him where he is going. He replies that he is going to Benares to lead the life of a Brahman ascetic. The uncle affects to be deeply concerned and begs him not to go. If the boy will only stay at home, he will provide him with a wife, either his own daughter or some other suitable girl. The lad after due reflection pretends to be convinced. He gives up his intention of going to Benares, goes home and the threadgirding ceremony ends with a feast.



## CHAPTER II.

### MARRIAGE.

The first question that my readers will ask after finishing the last chapter will be "What have the girls been doing, while the boys have been going through the ceremonies just described?" "The birth ceremony of a girl and her Shashti puja or sixth-day worship are the same as those of a boy. Her ear is bored in five places instead of in one. Her nostril is pierced when she is a year or two old. She is presented to the sun (Suryavalokan), but she does not have to choose a trade. Her profession is marriage. Her birthday is celebrated much as a boy's is, but her head is not shaven and she is not girt with the sacred thread. It is by her marriage that she is initiated as a full member of the Brahman caste.

In the marriage ceremony her role is just as important as that of the boy; for it is from her side that the offer of marriage comes. Fifty years ago in the Deccan, Brahman girls were usually married between six and ten and boys between ten and fifteen. Nowadays they marry later. The girl is usually fourteen years old and the boy from eighteen to twenty-four. Still no matter what the girl's age when she is married, there neither was nor is any consummation until she has reached womanhood. Marriage is still not arranged by

the contracting parties, but by their parents. Sometimes the parents of the girl know no suitable boy; in that case the family priest or clerk or sometimes the father himself has to go in search of one. Whoever the envoy, he is provided with the girl's horoscope and when he hears of a family wherein there is a likely boy, he goes to the parents' house. If the ambassador is the priest, which is most frequently the case, he takes a seat in the verandah. The boy's father enquires the object of the visit; and when he learns it, he goes inside and tells his womenfolk that a priest has come with the horoscope of Mr.—'s daughter. Naturally there is a buzz of excitement and much talk; but the matter is one that cannot be decided out of hand. The boy's father takes the girl's horoscope and begs the priest to return in three or four days. In the meantime the father of the boy sends his own priest or some sensible relation to see the girl and to ask a dowry in inverse proportion to her looks. If the girl is too ugly, an ingenious way out exists. The offer of the girl is not refused. That would be deemed discourteous by the polished Brahman. The boy's representative asks a dowry far exceeding the means of the girl's parents. That definitely closes the negotiation.

If the priest approves of her, he will say in a low tone for the father's benefit. "Yes; she will reach the boy's shoulder; that is well." The girl goes back into the house, so that her father and the priest may settle her destiny. There is a little haggling about the dowry, but not much;

because the incomes of the two families are usually known. The dowry settled, the priest returns to the boy's parents.

Sometimes it happens that the prospective husband is a man of mature years, who has lost his first wife. Then the situation is usually, although not always, reversed. It is he who as a rule searches for a girl and offers money to her father. With the increase in the number of widow remarriages, widowers can now often marry widows.

Once the marriage terms are settled, the next matter is the date and hour of the wedding ceremony. To fix these is the duty of the astrologer and fussy fathers often give him a lot of trouble; but in the end the parties always accept his decision both as to a lucky day and a lucky minute. Musicians have next to be hired and a porch built outside the front door of the house of the girl's father; for therein the wedding ceremonies will take place.

Invitations have now to be issued and this is a very serious business. It is not sufficient to send invitation cards by post; that would be deemed a very cavalier way of inviting wedding guests. The family gods are, it is true, invited by a letter sprinkled with red powder and put in the gods' house; but more ordinary guests are invited personally. A joint procession, composed of relatives of both sexes, a priest, musicians and servants starts off. At first it goes to the young bridegroom's house, where it is joined by a party from his family. The joint procession visits the

temple of Ganpati; for that charming little god makes prosperous all new undertakings. They pray him to be present and to ward off all difficulties. Then they go to the houses of those whom they wish to invite. At each house one of the priests lays a few grains of coloured rice in the host's hands and begs him to attend the marriage. At the same time the women of the procession go inside the house, lay a few grains on the eldest woman's hands and invite her with the other ladies of the house. When all the guests have been asked, the priests receive their invitations.

#### FIRST DAY.

The wedding ceremonies last four days.\* The first day is the day of the troth plighting or the Wagnischaya. The ceremony begins with the blessing of the day (Punyahavachan). At seven A.M. the girl's father and mother dress themselves in their best and, followed by the boy's parents, lay a cocoanut and a packet of betel leaves before the household gods and beg leave to begin the wedding. They return to the marriage hall where they bow to the assembled guests. The boy's sister sticks on the priest's brow some red powder and a grain or two of rice and waves round his head and then round the heads of the chief Brahmans

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\*Nowadays the period is usually reduced to three days.

present, a lighted lamp. The planets are worshipped (Grihamak) and then Ganpati. All is now ready for the troth-plighting.

The boy's father, who has in the meantime gone home, returns to the house of the girl's father, accompanied by musicians, kinsmen, the family priest and servants carrying ornaments and other presents. Priests salute priests and fathers salute fathers. Next Varuna or Neptune, the god of the sea, receives worship and after him Sachi, the wife of Indra. She is deemed to have been a model wife. The bride's sister ties a marriage ornament on the bride's forehead and her priest tells the girl's mother that the boy's people have come to ask for the girl. The mother answers that her girl may go with them. The boy's father gives the bride some ornaments and clothes, which she has to put on. The boy's mother or some one on the boy's behalf washes the bride's feet, pours into her lap wheat, a cocoanut, a packet of betel leaves and some sweetmeats. The foreheads of the male guests are touched with sandalwood oil and packets of betel leaves and cocoanuts are distributed. When the guests have gone, the priest takes a thread of the same length as the girl's height and makes it into a wick. He puts the wick into a lamp, fills it with oil and lights it in honour of the marriage god Gaurihar (=Parvati and Shiva). The lamp is kept alight through the wedding days. Thereafter it is put by to be used again in the month of Shrawan, when the girl worships Mangalgaury (=Parvati).



## SECOND DAY.

On the second day of the marriage is performed the Simantpujan or worship of the boundary.\* If the boy and the girl live in separate villages, then the boundaries are definitely worshipped, much as the Romans worshipped the god Terminus. When the boy and girl live in the same village, the boundary worship is a mere form and is usually performed in the boy's house. The girl's relatives, but not the girl, accompanied by musicians and married ladies, carrying baskets and trays of cocoanuts, rice, butter, milk, sugar, sandal, etc., go in procession to the boy's house. There the boy seated on a high stool awaits them. The girl's father takes a silver cup, full of rice, puts a betelnut on the rice and worships it as Ganpati. He next worships his family priest, to whom he gives a new turban. Lastly, he worships his future son-in-law. The girl's mother pours warm water over the boy's feet and the girl's father dries them, touches the boy's forehead with sandalwood oil and sticks on it grains of rice. He hands the boy a new turban and a sash, which the boy puts on. The boy's sister fastens a chaplet of flowers round the new turban. Other flowers and rice are thrown over him and in his hand is put a nosegay. The girl's mother washes the feet of the boy's sister, the boy's mother and kinswomen and pours rice and cocoanuts into their laps. The girl's relatives then go home.

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\*Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the bridegroom is welcomed by the worship of the boundary.

The same evening, however, the girl's kinspeople make a second procession to the house of the boy's father with a special dinner prepared for the occasion. After they have started, the girl who has stayed behind, as before, sits in front of the marriage god Gaurihar and throws rice on the image. As she does so, she says. "Gauri, Gauri, grant me a happy womanhood and grant a long life to him, who is coming to my door"\*. In the meantime the procession has reached the house of the boy's father and they offer him the dinner. A few of the girl's kinsmen stay to partake of it. The rest go home.

### THIRD DAY.

On the third day is the Vaiaprasthan or Marriage bidding. The girl's father invites the boy's father to his house, so as to complete the marriage ceremony on the following day. As he does so he puts a cocoanut into the hands of the boy's father and another into the hands of the priest. A cocoanut is given in return to shew that the invitation has been accepted.

That evening the boy goes to take up his residence in the bride's house. He puts on the new scarf given him the previous day and his sister ties a fresh garland round his turban. He bows to the gods and to the elders of his house; then with a cocoanut in his hand, he mounts a horse. Behind him his relatives and friends form

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\*The Marathi formula is "Gauri, Gauri, Saubhagya de, dari yeti tyala ayusha de"

a procession and with link boys and musicians in front of him and his relatives behind, the young bridegroom begins his triumphal march to the girl's home. Everywhere evil spirits are on the watch to mar the marriage; so to quiet them, cocoanuts are broken and the bits thrown on all sides. The residents of the houses, that the procession passes, do their best to avert calamity by waving lighted lamps in front of the boy.

When the boy reaches the girl's house, rice, the emblem of fertility both east and west, is thrice waved round the boy's head and thrown into the street. The boy dismounts; the girl's brother takes him by the right ear and gives him a turban. The girl's father lifts his future son-in-law in his arms and carries him over the threshold and into the marriage hall, where the boy is seated on a high wooden stool. The astrologer writes the name of the god Ganpati in the marriage porch and puts two pots of cold water before the fathers of the girl and boy. These the fathers worship while the astrologer repeats verses. Finally he reads out the two marriage papers and gives a copy to each father.

#### FOURTH DAY.

The fourth day is really the most important; indeed it might almost be said that it is the real wedding day and that the other three are merely occupied with preliminaries. It is on the fourth day that the seven steps (Saptapadi) are taken, the

irrevocable part of the ceremony. Just before the saptapadi the vivaha hom takes place. The sacred fire or hom is lit on the altar inside the marriage porch. The boy and girl holding grain in their joined hands throw it on the fire twice.

Now begins the saptapadi. The boy and girl sit on stools. The household priest calls to the women and children. All gather round, pretending to be very much amused and interested. The sacred fire is rekindled. To the left of it are heaped seven little piles of rice and close by is set a stone for grinding sandalwood. The boy places his foot just behind the girl's. Her brother next presses his foot against the boy's, so that the pressure forces the girl to step in turn over each of the seven heaps of rice. Each step has a special significance and the texts repeated by the priest can be interpreted thus :

"May Vishnu make thee take one step for food, one step for strength, one step for cattle, one step for priests to perform sacrifices, one step for wealth and one step for religion."

When the last of the seven steps have been taken,\* the pair are indissolubly married. A priest leads the couple outside the house and points out to them Dhruva or the Polestar. They bow to it with joined hands. Re-entering the house, they are given little parcels of betel leaf. By turn each puts in his or her mouth a parcel and the

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\*Often the footpressing is omitted and the couple take seven steps together hand in hand.

other bites off the end. They then play a game called ekabeki, a game similar to our odds and evens, until their relations tell the boy to take the girl on his knee and kiss her.

Suddenly the boy's female relatives pretend to take offence and return in high dudgeon to the boy's home. After a decent interval—so as to allow the boy's people to recover their tempers—the girl's relations play a return comedy. They follow the boy's womenfolk to his house and pretend to make up to them by offering them baskets of flour, rice, butter and cocoanuts. The girl's brother and father lead a horse with rich trappings to soothe the boy's father. They all beseech him to return with them and dine. The father of the boy affects to sulk and refuses the invitation unless he is promised ornaments and new clothes. The girl's father makes the required promises and all return to the girl's house. The comedy is now over and dinner is announced. The boy sits with his bride at the head of the male guests and bride and bridegroom feed each other from the same plate. The other women dine in a separate room. In front of the boy's mother is a wafer biscuit which she is asked to break. Thereafter begin the Ukhane or rhyming matches. The women of both sides repeat alternatively, rhyming couplets, that begin politely, but end in comic abuse.\* This

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\*Here are one or two specimens :

Strophe : Samor hota konada tyant hota tava, rusu naka, phugu  
naka, savakash jeva.

In front was a niche in which was a frying pan, do not sulk, do not  
be proud, eat slowly.

lasts all through dinner. When everyone has finished, one of the ladies gets up and says :

“ Samor hota konada, tyant hoti lahi ; amhi purusha dekhat ukhane ghalit nahi.”

(In front was a niche, in it was a grain of rice. We will not match rhymes when our menfolk are present). This ends the marriage ceremonial ; but its consummation is postponed until the girl has reached puberty.

Within five days of the last marriage day, there comes the *Varat*. This is the time when the bride changes her name. In Europe the ladies change their surnames. In India they change their first names as well. The boy and girl meet at the girl's house, mount together a horse, the girl in front. As they do so, one of the boy's sisters ties together the ends of their dresses. Followed by the usual

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Antistrophe : Chandanache patavar thevala pay, savakash jevayala kelet kay.

I have put my feet on a stool of sandalwood, what have you made ready that I may eat slowly.

Strophe : Samor hota konada tyant hota gadu, savakash jevayala kele bundiche ladu.

In front was a niche in which was a drinking cup ; I have prepared gram sweetballs, that you may eat slowly.

Antistrophe : Samor hota konada tyant hoti lahi, amhala bundiche ladu avadat nahi.

In front was a niche, in it was a grain of rice ; we do not like your sweetballs.

Strophe : Samor hota konada tyant hoti suri, kasatyachi niri, tar kasbin khari.

In front was a niche in which was a knife ; from her way of tucking in her petticoat, she was clearly a harlot.

Sometimes the ladies' wit runs away with them ; trouble ensues and the gentlemen have to interfere. Once a bride's party was fined Rs. 500 for this ukhane : “ Navari nakshatra, navara meshpatra. The bride is like a star ; the bridegroom is ugly and silly.

procession of musicians, kinsmen and friends, they ride towards the boy's house. The boy's sister puts a pot of rice on the threshold of the halldoor; the bride kicks it over. The boy's sister refills it and the bride again kicks it over. This is done three times. Then the bridegroom tells the bride that his sister wants their daughter. The bride replies that if she has seven boys and the eighth is a girl, she will give her in marriage to her sister-in-law's son. After some unimportant rites, the boy and girl sit on low wooden stools before the gods; the boy's relatives tell him the bride's new name and he whispers it into her right ear.

## CHAPTER III.

### CONSUMMATION AND PREGNANCY.

The Garbhadan or conception ceremony is the term applied to the ritual observed on the occasion of the bride's first courses. But before this can be done, the god Shiva as the guardian of the spot must be appeased. This observance is known as the Bhuwaneshwari Shanti. Strictly speaking, the Bhuwaneshwari Shanti need only be performed if the courses begin at an unlucky moment. But since according to Sir James Campbell it is only once in five hundred times that the moment is not unlucky, a Bhuwaneshwari Shanti may be said to be always performed.

The girl's married women neighbours are invited and they lay in her lap, but without touching her, a turmeric root, a betel nut and a handful of rice. The girl takes her seat inside a bamboo frame, dressed in new clothes and ornaments. Musicians play for four days and a Maratha woman attends the bride day and night, washing her clothes, combing her hair and sleeping with her.

On the fifth day the boy and girl go through much the same ceremonial as on the last day of the marriage, save that they do not walk the seven steps or go to see the pole star. The most interesting part of this ceremony is when the boy offers rice to the various demons, naming them as he does so. He takes some rice in his hands and says "I offer this to you Yaksha, Brahmachari, Bhut, Pret,



Pishachya, Shankini, Dankini and Vetāl and other evil spirits. Eat it and depart in peace. "He throws the rice into a basket which a Maratha servant puts outside to feed the demons. The ceremony ends when the boy takes a pinch of ashes from the sacred fire and touches with them his own and the girl's forehead. The priest and other Brahmans present call down a blessing on the heads of the bride and bridegroom.

Once the Bhuwaneshwari Shanti is over and the earthgod and the demons have been duly quieted, the young couple can get on with the conception ceremony. They sit near the sacrificial fire, cooking rice and throwing butter into it. A little later they rise and throw flowers towards the sun. Presents are put into the laps of the boy and girl and the boy whispers his own name into the girl's ear. That evening there is a feast and afterwards husband and wife bite rolls of betel nut held in each other's teeth just as they did on the 4th day of the marriage. The girl washes the boy's feet and marks his brow with sandal wood oil. She puts a nosegay in his hands and distributes sweetmeats and packets of betel nut among the guests. Then at last the marriage can be consummated. The boy lifts his wife in his arms and carries her into the nuptial room.

#### PREGNANCY.

When the young wife becomes *enceinte*, she is the object of the care and solicitude of all. \*

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\* Sometimes all the friends and relatives of the family invite her to dinner (dohaljewan), and give her cloth for a bodice and a sari.

Everyone tries to be as nice and kind to her as possible and to give her everything that she wants ; but since she is at this time peculiarly exposed to the assaults of evil spirits, she and her husband have to walk very warily. The wife must stay indoors as far as possible. She must not go inside an empty house or one with an upper storey or sit under a tree or ride a horse or an elephant. She should not sit with her feet turned back, nor quarrel, nor weep, nor sleep during the day nor lie awake at night. She should on the other hand eat betel nut and betel leaves, put lamp black on her eyes, bathe and cut her hair. If she has an issue of blood, she should give a Brahman a sacred gold thread. The husband's regimen during his wife's pregnancy is almost as severe as hers. He must not build a house ; for that might rouse the wrath of the earth spirit. He must not bathe in the sea for the sea shore is thick with ghosts. He must not attend a funeral, for the burning ground is a favourite meeting place of evil spirits. He must not travel, because in so doing he must cross village boundaries and may so incur the wrath of the god of the boundary. He must not shave his head or rather get it shaved, because a sorcerer might get hold of the bits of hair and practise all sorts of black magic against him.

During the pregnancy three important ceremonies are usually, although not always, performed:—

- (1) The Punsavan or man bearing ceremony in the second month.

- (2) The Anawalobhan or quench longing in the fourth month.
- (3) The Simantonayana or hairparting in the sixth or eighth month.

In each case the ceremonies are similar to those at marriage; but at the Punsavan the husband takes in his hollowed hand a little water and pours it on the ground before him. As he does so, he says:

“I pour this water that the child in my wife’s body may be a boy and be intelligent, that he may live long and that he may not suffer in the hour of birth; that he may not be possessed by Bhuts, Gans or Rakshasas and that he may be happy and live long.”

At the Anawalobhan ceremony, a husband drops into his wife’s hollowed hands a grain of wheat and two grains of pulse and over them a little curds. She takes these in her mouth and three times her husband asks her what she is sipping. Each time she replies: “I am sipping that by which women conceive.” The husband and wife wash their hands and feet outside the house and sit on wooden stools. He puts his right hand on his wife’s head and prays that the child may be a boy and that he may be born in the tenth month.

At the Simantonayana the husband takes a water pot, fills it with water, places some grains of rice on the lid and on the rice sets up a golden image of the god Vishnu. He next takes a porcu-

pine quill and a blade of sacred grass and passing them along the parting in his wife's hair, fastens them to the knot behind her head. He puts a garland round her neck, decks her with ornaments and puts flowers in her hair. Both husband and wife receive presents and give money to Brahmans. Between the Simantonayana and the child's birth, the wife is deemed impure and no one can receive water or food at her hands.



## CHAPTER IV.

### FINAL ATONEMENT AND DEATH.

When a Brahman feels himself mortally sick he gets ready to atone for all his sins (Sarwa Prayaschitta vidhi). This is similar to the plenary absolution sought by the dying Catholic. Naturally everyone postpones the act until the last moment. Indeed the dying Brahman's friends and relatives urge him to do so ; for to prepare for the final atonement is to renounce all hope of recovery.

No one can make a final atonement without asking his heir's, usually his son's, leave. If the sick man is too ill, his heir can perform the ceremony in his place. Even if the sick man dies without making atonement, his heirs can still do it for him on the eleventh day after his death.

On the morning of the day of atonement the penitent bathes and puts on a clean waistcloth and scarf. He sits down in front of several Brahman shastris (divines) and puraniks (scripture readers). With some copper coins, a cup of water and a ladle he walks round the Brahmans, throws himself on his face and then stands in front of them with joined hands. The Brahmans say to the penitent :

“ Tell us truly why you have called us and why you have thus bowed before us ? ”

The penitent replies :

"I have not ceased from sin from my birth until this moment—either knowingly or ignorantly, deliberately or accidentally, once or often, with body, speech, or mind, alone or with others, by drinking or not drinking, by eating or not eating, by eating or drinking with men of other castes, by causing others to sin, by eating or drinking from unclean vessels, by defiling another and in many other ways. Do you receive me and by absolving me, free me from the burden of my sins."

He bows before the Brahmans and again says: "You are able to do so, free me from the burden of my sins, penitent as I am." He again bows and hands over to the Brahmans some copper coins. The Brahmans then choose one of their number to be their representative (Anuvadak). The latter calls the penitent by name and says:

"Except such grievous sins as murder and adultery, I take on myself the sins of my patron and free him from them."

The scapegoat Brahman receives a double fee and bearing on his shoulders the burden of his host's sins leaves the house.

The penitent rubs himself first with ashes and then bathes carefully. He rubs himself with cow's urine, cowdung, milk, curds and butter, bathing after the application of each fresh material. He then worships Vishnu, feeds the Brahmans and dismisses them. If he is well enough the penitent fasts all day. If he is too ill to fast, he can eat food, but must touch no salt. Women as well as men perform the atonement ceremony.

## DEATH.

When the Brahman is on the point of death, a spot in the women's hall is smeared with cowdung; tulsi leaves are sprinkled over the cowdung and a blanket is spread over the leaves. The dying man is laid on the blanket. His head should be towards the north *i.e.*, towards the holy Ganges and his feet towards the south *i.e.*, towards Ceylon or Lanka, where the demons live. A few drops of Ganges water are poured into his mouth. One learned Brahman recites verses from the Vedas, another lines from the Bhagwat Gita, while relatives press the dying man to say "Narayan! Narayan!" His son takes his father's head gently on his lap and tries to comfort and console him, as best he can.

When life is extinct, the women sit round the body and wail and weep; the men and boys sit bareheaded in the verandah. The servants go out to tell relatives and friends. The latter put on mourning dress *i.e.*, a waistcloth and a shawl and lay out the body. One or more go to the market to buy what is needed for the funeral. The chief mourner, usually the son, bathes and has his head, save the topknot, and his face, save the eye-brows and eye lashes, shaved by the barber and his nails pared. He shifts his sacred thread from its usual position on the left shoulder to his right shoulder <sup>1</sup>. The body is carried outside by the nearest male

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1. In other religious sacrifices the sacred thread remains on the left shoulder.



relatives. The older men strip it naked, except for a loin cloth and put a piece of gold and an emerald in its mouth. A few drops of Ganges water are sprinkled into the mouth and over the body. A cloth is stretched over the body and the two thumbs and two great toes are tied together. If the dead leaves children a hole is made in the face cloth over the mouth. The body is now ready to be taken to the burning ground on a bier.

The widow has no right to join in the funeral ceremonies. She takes off her ornaments and puts on some valueless trinkets. She then calls in the barber to shave her head and pare her nails. She breaks her bangles and her marriage necklace, rubs off the red mark on her forehead that proclaims her wifeness, takes off her bodice and puts on a white robe<sup>1</sup>. Her hair is wrapped in the bodice and placed upon the bier.

The funeral procession is now ready to start.

The chief mourner, carrying a firepot full of burning coal, leads the way. Close to him walk two men, of whom one holds a metal pot containing cooked rice. The other carries some parched rice and a quantity of cocoanut chips; these he throws around him to appease the evil spirits. Next four close kinsmen follow carrying the bier with the corpse on it, feet first. Then come the body of the mourners, bare-headed and barefooted; they repeat in a low voice "Ram! Ram!" "Govind! Govind!"

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1. Since the progress of the widow remarriage movement, the old custom of shaving the head is only observed by elderly widows.

Half way to the burning ground the bearers change places, but without looking back. When the mourners reach the burning grounds, they build an earthen altar and pour over it the fire from the firepot. A Karta or professional funeral priest<sup>1</sup> now officiates; for the family priest will not officiate at a funeral. A spot is chosen for the funeral pyre and the corpse is laid upon the bier with its feet to the south. The thumbs and great toes are freed and the loin cloth is cut, so that the body may leave the world naked as it entered it. If the dead is a male,<sup>2</sup> the chief mourner lights the woodpile at the head; if the dead is a woman, the chief mourner lights the woodpile at the feet. He fans the fire until it blazes up with his scarf, while the Karta recites sacred verses.

When the skull bursts, the chief mourner takes an earthen jar of cold water. Another mourner makes, with a pebble, a small hole in it and the chief mourner walks round the pyre, while the water trickles out. Then a second hole is made in the pot and again the chief mourner walks round the pyre. Lastly a third hole is made in the pot and the chief mourner spills what remains

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1. The word *Karta* is derived from the Sanskrit *Karat* a funeral rite. The Kartas are not deemed the equals of other Brahmans and are deemed unclean. They eat, drink and marry with other Kartas. Only in rare cases are they asked to conduct a marriage or a threadgirding ceremony.

2. I have described above the death of a male Brahman. If the dead be a wife, she is completely dressed. Her hair is braided, red powder is rubbed on her brow and turmeric on her face and arms. Ornaments are put in her nose and ears and on her head and feet; and her lap is filled with fruit and flowers.

of the water over the dead man's ashes. He calls aloud, striking his open mouth with his hand. The mourner, who made the hole in the pot, now ties a blade of grass round the pebble used for making the hole and names it Ashma or the stone of life. To quench the spirit of the dead man's thirst, the chief mourner pours water over the stone of life and the other mourners follow suit. All can now return home; but before starting, they relieve their feelings by throwing a stone in the direction of the nearest hill or mountain.

## CHAPTER V.

### LATER CEREMONIES.

The funeral ceremonies by no means complete the honours paid to the dead. The funeral procession returns to the deceased man's house. The spot where he died is smeared with cowdung and a lighted lamp is set on it. The mourners pass close to the lamp and look at it, in order to cool their eyes, supposed to have been heated by staring at the blazing pyre. They then file out.

Mourning is observed by the dead man's family for ten days. The first day they cook no food in the house and their meals are sent in by relatives or caste fellows. The other mourning days they deprive themselves of sugar, milk and betelnut. They are also forbidden to shave their heads, to anoint their bodies or to wear shoes or turbans. Every day for ten days a passage from the sacred Garud Puran or Book of Garud is read aloud and before dining the family must see at least one star in the heavens.

On the third day is the bone gathering (Asthi-sanchayan). The chief mourner, accompanied by a Karta, goes to the burning ground and picks out the unburnt bones of the deceased. He collects them in a basket and throws them into some neighbouring pond or stream. If, however, the family is a rich one, the chief mourner collects the

bones in a jar, which he buries near his house. A year later he goes on a pilgrimage to Nasik or Benares and throws them into the Godavari or the Ganges.

For ten days the chief mourner performs certain ceremonies that the deceased may get a fresh body. On the first day the dead man gets a new head, the second day he gets new ears, eyes and nose; on the third day he gets new hands and a new breast and neck and so on until the ninth day, when the deceased's body is completely renovated. On the tenth day his spirit acquires a hunger and a thirst for its new abode.

On the morning of the eleventh day the whole house is cowdunged and purified of the uncleanness caused by the death. This done, an earthen altar is built and a sacred fire is lit and the chief mourner pours rice and milk and wheat flour into it. He then brings in a male and female calf, puts new waistcloths on their backs and throws garlands of flowers round their necks. The male calf is branded and its bellowing is supposed to carry the deceased to heaven; indeed its first cry is supposed to open the doors of heaven for the deceased to enter. Both the calves are then taken into the road and set free. People who cannot afford live calves make calves out of dough. Presents are given to a chosen Brahman by the chief mourner, who offers him flowers and rice and waves a lighted lamp round him, saying:

"I make you this present that the dead may be freed from his sins and reach heaven in safety and that there he may have all his life a cot to lie

on, a packet of betel to eat, a maid to wait on him, an umbrella to shade him from the sun and a stick to help him in walking."

The Brahman then lies on a cot and pretends to be the *pret* or ghost of the dead man. He is carried out of the house to some distance and feet first, as if he were a corpse, and set down on the road. There he is pelted by the mourners with earth and cowdung and sometimes with stones. The cot and a small present are the reward of the Brahman.

On the twelfth day after the deceased's death is held the Sapinda Shraddh or memorial service in honour of seven generations of ancestors. Its object is to convert the deceased's ghost or Pret into a Pitra or fatherly guardian spirit and to unite it to the mourner's Pitamaha or grandfather and his Prapitamaha or great grandfather.

A dinner is prepared in the cattle shed. If the mourner is poor, he puts in a line three bits of plantain leaf facing northwards. They will represent his grandfather, his great-grandfather and his great-great-grandfather. Two other leaves facing east will represent the two deities Kuldev and Kamdev (Lares and Penates). A sixth, facing north-east, will represent the deceased. If the mourner is rich he will substitute six Brahmans for the six plantain leaves. The ceremonies that follow are too complicated to be given in detail and would only weary the reader. It will suffice to say that the mourner serves rice to the plantain leaves or Brahmans and says "Idam Anam" (this

is food). The Brahmans eat the food or the plantain leaves are supposed to. What is left of the rice, the mourner moulds into three balls or pinds and one rolling pin. The three balls represent his grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather. He next takes a little water into his right-hand and says "I now join my dead father with his dead forefathers." Lastly he takes one of the rice balls and joins to it a part of the rice rolling pin and says "I unite the first part of the dead with my grandfather." Thereafter he unites in the same way the deceased to his great-grandfather and his great-great-grandfather. The change of the deceased from a pret or ghost to a pitra or guardian spirit is now complete. All the relatives offer flowers and food to the three balls, worship them and ask their blessing. The mourner is pure once more. The priest touches his brow with sandalwood paste and blesses him in these words :

"May you live long and gain as much merit from the ceremony, as if it had been performed in Gaya itself."

Later in the day another ceremony known as the Pathaya Shraddh is performed. The chief mourner puts in a row three rice balls to represent his father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He worships them and presents them with shoes, clothes, an umbrella, food and a jar full of cold water. These articles are believed to protect the three ancestors from thorns, cold, heat, hunger and thirst during their journey to heaven.

On the thirteenth day after the deceased's death the mourner has to begin again the ordinary duties of life. He puts out all the lights and fires in the house except a small lamp near him and worships a betelnut as the god Ganpati. Close by him he puts a jar of water known as Shanti Kalash or the Soothing Pot. Into the water he drops mango leaves, bent grass, a betelnut and four copper coins. Taking a ladle of water in his right-hand, the mourner says: "I perform this ceremony for myself and my family, so that they may be happy hereafter and not be afflicted by similar trouble."

Four Brahmans sprinkle water over the heads of the entire family and all over the house and furniture. Fire in the oven is rekindled from the flame of the solitary lamp. The chief mourner with a stone breaks a betelnut on the threshold of the front door—an act strictly forbidden on other occasions—and chews a little of it. A feast is given to which the four pall bearers are specially asked; but none whose parents are still living can attend. When the feast is over, the chief mourner in a new turban goes to the temple, bows to the god and returns home. On his return the guests take their leave.

On the anniversary of the deceased's death and on Mahapaksha or Pitripaksha (All Saints' Night), which falls in the month of Bhadrapad (August-September) the Shraddh service, as above described, is repeated.





## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HINDU YEAR, MONTHS, WEEKS AND DAYS.

The Hindu year is a lunar year fitted to solar periods. In other words the Hindu month lasts from one new moon until the next. Now twelve lunar months cover a period of 354 days only. The Hindu year, therefore, falls short of the solar year by eleven days. In three years this difference amounts to one month and three days. This difference is remedied by inserting seven intercalary months in nineteen years. The intercalary months do not occur at regular intervals. The rule governing them is as follows : To each of the twelve lunar months one of the twelve zodiacal divisions or sankrants is allotted. The sankrants vary in length from 29 to  $32\frac{1}{2}$  days; thus it sometimes happens that a lunar month passes without a fresh sankrant. An intercalary month is then added. It takes the name of the month that it succeeds, but is in addition called *adhik*.

The Hindu month begins, as I have said, on the day of the new moon. It is divided into two halves—the *shudh* or *shukla paksh* (the bright or clean half) and the *vadya* or *Krishna paksh* (the dark half). Each half month has fifteen days called *tithis*. They are numbered, but by Sanskrit and not by Marathi numbers, *e.g.*, the first is called *Pratipada*; the second *dwitiya*, the third *tritiya*, the fourth *chaturthi*, the fifth *panchami*, the sixth

shashti, the seventh saptami, the eighth ashtami, the ninth navami, the tenth dashami, the eleventh ekadashi, the twelfth dwadashi, the thirteenth trayodashi, the fourteenth chaturdashi; and the fifteenth is called purnima or full moon day. The second half of the month is numbered in the sameway, only the fifteenth is not called purnima. It is called amawasya or "with living." It is believed that because there is no moon visible and the sun and moon are in the same quarter, they are living together.

Besides this ancient reckoning by half months, the Hindus also use weeks or seven days. These were introduced by the Bactrian Greeks; and strangely enough the modern Hindu week resembles the week of the Greek silver age\* more closely than does the week of any modern European country, *e.g.*:

Sunday=Raviwar or Aditwar=Sun's day  
(Greek Heliou Hemera).

Monday=Somwar=Moon's day (Greek  
Selenes Hemera).

Tuesday=Mangalwar=Mars' day (Greek  
Areus Hemera).

Wednesday=Budhwar=Mercury's day (Greek  
Hermeis Hemera).

Thursday=Brihaspatiwar=Jupiter's day  
(Greek Zenos Hemera).

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\* In the classical period the Greeks divided their month into three periods of ten days each. The French adopted this system in the Revolution and abandoned it afterwards.

Friday = Shukrawar = Venus' day = (Greek Aphrodites Hemera).

Saturday = Shaniwar = Saturn's day (Greek Kronou Hemera).

The French, who are nearer than the English to the Greek original have Lundi (Moon's day), Mardi (Mars' day), Mercredi (Mercury's day), Jeudi (Jupiter's day), Vendredi (Venus' day) the same as the Hindus; but their Samedi or Saturday is a corruption of Sabbaton or the Sabbath and Dimanche or Sunday is dies doménica or the day of Our Lord.

#### RAVIWAR OR SUNDAY.

Some curious beliefs still linger among old-fashioned Brahmans about the days of the week. The sun-god is said to be a red man seated in a car with a quoit or a lotus in his hand. He drives either a team of seven horses—a Greek heritage—or one horse with seven heads. Sunday is a good day for beginnings, *e.g.*, for sowing seed, for building a house, for inaugurating a reign. On Sunday nights a green robe should be worn.

#### SOMWAR OR MONDAY.

In Hindu eyes the moon is not a goddess but a god (*cf.* the German *der Mond*). He is a large, gentle and kindly being with four arms and the colour of fire. He rides a white elephant. Monday is a good day on which to begin a war or to mount a

horse or an elephant.\* On Monday nights a parti-coloured robe should be worn.

#### MANGALWAR OR TUESDAY.

This is the day of the planet Mars. He sprang from the sweat on the brow of Mahadeva or Shiva. He is the god of war as in ancient Europe. If a girl comes to womanhood on a Tuesday she will commit suicide. On Tuesday night a red robe should be worn.

#### BUDHWAR OR WEDNESDAY.

This is the day of the planet Budh or Mercury. He is the son of the moon and a star. He is of the middle height, young and eloquent. He wears a warrior's dress and rides a chariot drawn by lions. Wednesday is an unlucky day for a northern journey. If a girl reaches womanhood on a Wednesday she will bear daughters. On Wednesday night a yellow robe should be worn.

#### BRIHASPATIWAR OR THURSDAY.

This day is sacred to the planet Brihaspati or Jupiter (Diauspitar). According to Hindu mythology Brihaspati is not the king, but the priest of the gods. He is a wise, stout, wheat-coloured old Brahman, seated on a horse. A girl who comes

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\* Similar curious beliefs may be found in England. I remember one which prescribed the days for cutting nails.

On Monday for wealth, on Tuesday for health, on Wednesday best of all; on Thursday for pleasure; on Friday for treasure, etc., etc.

to womanhood on a Thursday is lucky ; she will be the mother of many sons. Thursday is an unlucky day for a journey southwards. On Thursday night a white robe should be worn.

#### SHUKRAWAR OR FRIDAY.

This day is sacred to the planet Shukra or Venus. But Shukra is not a divinely beautiful woman like Aphrodite. Shukra is the teacher of the giants. He is depicted as a gentle, ease-loving Brahman, astride a horse. Friday is a great day for eating gram in honour of Balarama, the brother of Shri Krishna. Clerks club together to lay up a store of gram in their offices. Women send presents of gram to Maratha schools. A girl who reaches womanhood on a Friday bears daughters. A blow from a falling lizard on Friday brings wealth. On Friday night a white dress should be worn.

#### SHANWAR OR SATURDAY.

This is the planet Saturn's day. Shani is a most malignant planet. He is a Chandal by caste; he is tall, thin, old, ugly and lame. He has long hair, nails and teeth and he rides a black vulture. He has a vile temper and he loves evil. He is the patron of illdoers, who on Saturday worship at his shrine. Saturday is a good day on which to sin, steal and prepare poison. It is a bad day for starting on a journey. Girls, who reach womanhood on a Saturday, become bad characters.

Children who eat gram on Saturdays do not thrive and are apt to turn into horses. A blow from a falling lizard on a Saturday takes away wealth. Strangely enough Saturday is a good day on which to tie an elephant to one's door. Nevertheless my readers will not be surprised to learn that on Saturday nights a black robe should be worn.

In the Deccan the year is Chaitradi, *i.e.*, it begins on the first Chaitra (March and April). Then follow Vaishakh (April-May), Jestha (May-June), Ashadh (June-July), Shrawan (July-August), Bhadrapad (August-September), Ashwin (September-October), Kartik (October-November), Margashirsh (November-December), Paush (December-January), Magh (January-February), Phalgun (February-March). North of the Narbada or Narmada river, the year is Kartikadi, *i.e.*, it begins on the first Kartik. In the Deccan the era followed is the Shaliwahan. It began in the year 78 A.D. North of the Narbada the era is the Samwat and began in the year 56 B.C. In converting a Hindu date into the corresponding English date, one should in the case of the Shaliwahan era add 78; in the case of the Samwat era one should deduct 56.

## CHAPTER VII.

### HINDU HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS.

The Hindus not having a regular day of rest made up for it by a series of holidays scattered throughout the year. I shall describe the most important of these. *Gudi Parwa* (The Banner First) is the first day of the Deccan Year. The story, told to explain why the year begins on the First Chaitra, is as follows :

In A.D. 78 the great king Vikramaditya ruled at Dharmanagar or Ujjain. By his virtues he had won a boon from the gods, that he should not die, save by the hand of a child born of a girl  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years old. When King Vikrama grew old, many ghastly signs and portents were seen at Ujjain. Comets coursed across the heavens, the earth quaked, the sky turned from blue to red. King Vikrama asked his astrologers the cause. They replied that such omens could only foretell the death of the king. Vikrama told them of the boon given him by the gods. Still the astrologers stuck to their first interpretation "Nothing, O King, is impossible to divinity." King Vikrama genuinely alarmed, sent out the ghost king Vetala to search for such a child. After many days of vain search, he came to the town of Pratishthan or Paithan on the banks of the Godavari. There he saw in the house of a potter a little boy and



a little girl, hardly any older, playing together. Vetal asked the two children how they were related. The little girl replied "This is my son" "Where is your father?" King Vetal asked her. She pointed to a Brahman and Vetal questioned him about the two children. "The little girl is my daughter" said the Brahman "and the little boy is her son." King Vetal could not believe his ears and retorted angrily "How can that be?" The Brahman answered "The ways of God are inscrutable. The Serpent King loved my daughter and she bore him the little boy yonder. His name is Shaliwahan."

On hearing this Vetal rode with all speed to Ujjain and told to King Vikrama all that he had heard and seen. King Vikrama rewarded Vetal richly and taking his sword rode to Paithan. Finding the potter's house, he went up to Shaliwahan with sword raised, meaning to kill him. Before the sword could fall, Shaliwahan struck King Vikrama so fierce a blow with his toy club, that the king fell to the ground and died instantly. This happened on the first of Chaitra. The same day Shaliwahan seized Vikrama's throne.

A variant of the above legend gives the king's name as Somakrant; it relates that the little girl after becoming a mother by the serpent king ~~was turned~~ out of Paithan by her relatives and was taken in by a potter. When Shaliwahan left babyhood, the potters taught him to mould clay figures, which he did in great numbers.

When Somakrant tried to kill him, Shalivahan breathed life into the clay images. These set upon Somakrant and destroyed him and his army.

A more probable explanation of the Shalivahan era has been suggested by the late Sir Ramkrishna Bhandarkar, one of the most learned of mankind. He maintained that the introduction of the Shalivahan era commemorated the expulsion of the Shakas from the Deccan. It is noteworthy that the Shalivahan era is also commonly called the Shake or Sake era.

2. *Rama Navami*, or Rama's Ninth, falls on the ninth of the bright half of Chaitra. It is the birthday of the great Ramachandra\*, the seventh incarnation of the god Vishnu. To avenge the capture of his queen, the divine Sita, he fought Ravan, the wicked demon king of Lanka or Ceylon, killed him and put the good Bibhishan on the fallen king's throne.

Rama Navami is especially popular with Prabhus, Rajputs and other castes that claim Kshatriya descent; for Ramachandra was the most splendid of all the Kshatriyas. It is, however, also very popular with the warlike Brahmans of the Deccan.

Since Ramachandra was born at noon, Hindus flock in holiday dress to Rama's temple. For some days previously Haridases, *i.e.*, devotees of Hari or Vishnu, have been singing the divine

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\* For an account of the divine Ramachandra's life and heroic deeds, see my *Indian Heroes* (Oxford University Press).

hero's praises; but now a preacher in each temple extols Rama's life and deeds. Just before noon the preacher retires and returns, bringing a cocoanut, rolled in a shawl like a new born baby. After holding it aloft that all may see it, he puts it in a cradle, hanging from the temple roof. The preacher announces that the god Ramachandra is born. The spectators bow to the god, shout his praises, throw red powder about and offer each other *sunthavada*, a kind of ginger sweetmeat. They go home to a good dinner; but in the evening they return to the temple to hear again the praises of the god.

*Hanuman's Birthday* falls six days after that of Ramachandra's, viz., on the 15th of the bright half of Chaitra, i.e., on the full moon of that month. Hanuman was the divine monkey that helped Ramachandra to conquer Ravan.

*Vad Purnima*, or the Banyan Full Moon, falls on the full moon of Jyeshth. It is held in honour of the noble Savitri\* who won her husband back from the claws of Yama, the king of death. She was the wife of Satyavan, of whom it had been prophesied that he would die a year after their marriage. On the last day of the year, Satyavan went into the forest to cut wood. Savitri followed him and saw him fall dead. As she sat by her husband weeping, Yama tried to take away Satyavan's soul. She followed Yama, begging so

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\* For a full account of Savitri and Satyavan, see my *Tales from the Indian Epics* (Oxford University Press).



Wad Pornima.

(To face p 52)



persistently for her husband's life that Yama, to get rid of her, promised to give her any boon but that. She asked as her boon a hundred sons by Satyavan. Yama granted it. Savitri then pointed out that the boon was impossible of fulfilment, unless Satyavan was restored to life. Yama unable to see a way out, gave her back her husband.

*Ashadhi Ekadashi* is the summer solstice. It falls on the eleventh of the bright half of *Āshadh*, on or about the 21st June. On that day the night of the gods begins. They rest their heads on *Shesha*, the Serpent King, and sleep for four months.

*Nag Panchami*, or Cobra Fifth, falls on the fifth day of the bright half of *Shravan*. On this day Brahman and especially Prabhu households worship the cobra. The married women draw on a wooden stool nine snakes with sandal powder and red lead. They pray to the snakes to guard them and their children. Then the eldest among them tells the children the story of the orphan daughter-in-law and the Snake King. I have given it in full in my *Deccan Nursery Tales* (Macmillan and Co.) and it is shortly this :

“Once upon a time a village headman had seven daughters-in-law. One of them was an orphan ; having no relations to protect her, she was made to do all the hard housework. When *Nag Panchami* came, six of the daughters-in-law were fetched home by their relatives. The poor orphan having none, stayed at her father-in-law's house and sitting in a corner began to cry softly

to herself. Then she prayed to the Snake King, asking him to pretend to be her uncle. The Snake King took pity on her and came to the house dressed as a Brahman. The orphan was so pleased that she persuaded her father-in-law that the visitor was her mother's brother and prevailed on him to let her go. The Snake King took her with him to his royal palace underground. There she was so unfortunate as to drop a lamp and burn off the tails of three young snakes. The Snake King, to save her from the Snake Queen's anger, took her home next day. When the young snakes grew up tailless, they were very angry with the orphan daughter-in-law and the next Nag Panchami day, they went to her house, meaning to bite her to death. When they reached the house, they found her worshipping their father and calling down blessings on themselves. Touched by her kindness they forebore from biting her; and drinking a saucer of milk that she offered them, they gave her in exchange a jewelled necklace."

After the story has been told, the ladies of the household fill saucers with milk and put them in likely spots for snakes to drink.

*Narali Purnima*, or Cocomanut Day, falls ten days after Nag Panchami, *i.e.*, upon the full moon of the month of Shravan. It is often said by English people to celebrate the first lessening of the monsoon, but this is very doubtful. Except for sailors, the lessening of the monsoon current is not a matter for jubilation. It would appear to

be a form of water worship. In the evening the men and children go to the edge of the nearest river and throw into it cocoanuts. On their return they take their seats on low wooden stools. The ladies of the house wave lighted lamps round their faces ; in return their men-folk give the ladies small money presents from one to ten rupees.

*Gokul Ashtami* falls eight days after *Narali Purnima* and on the eighth day of the dark half of *Shravan*. This is the birthday of *Shri Krishna*,\* the eighth incarnation of the God *Vishnu*. He would have been killed by his uncle *Kansa*, who organised the Massacre of the Innocents. This, by a strange coincidence has been fathered on *Herod the Great* and has been incorporated in Christianity. *Gokul Ashtami* is observed by all, but especially by the cowherds ; for it was among the cowherds of *Gokul* that *Shri Krishna* as a child found shelter. The cowherds dance in circles, covering themselves with dust and calling out ' *Gopal !* ' " *Govind !* " " *Narayan !* " " *Hari !* " — 'all names of *Shri Krishna*.

*Ganesha Chaturthi* falls on the fourth of the bright half of the month of *Bhadrpad*. It is the birthday of the god *Ganapati* or *Ganesha*, † the god of all beginnings. *Ganapati* is depicted by Hindu artists as a fat gentleman with four hands and an elephant's head. He is the son of *Parvati*

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\* For a full account of *Shri Krishna's* life see *Shri Krishna of Dwarka and other stories* " (Taraporevala).

† For a full account of *Ganapati* see "The Hindu gods and how to recognise them" (*Times of India Press*.)



and Shiva. When born, he was a beautiful child. Parvati was so proud of her offspring that she carried it about, showing it to everyone. Unfortunately, she was so unwise as to show it to the planet Saturn. That malignant luminary promptly burnt off poor Ganpati's head. Parvati in despair went to the god Brahmadeva for a new head for her son. He had no head to give her; but he advised her to look about for some animal or man caught in sin. Parvati wandered about until she came upon an elephant sleeping with its head the wrong way, namely, to the south. She promptly tore its head off and planted it on Ganpati's shoulders, where it took root. On Ganesh Chaturthi, no one should look at the moon. This is because the moon once laughed at Ganpati when he fell off his charger, a mouse.

On the morning of the festival, the head of the house, with children and servants, a band and a palanquin, go to the market and buy a gilt, clay image of the god. They seat it in the palanquin and take it home. There they put near it an image of a mouse and worship it, singing hymns of the god morning and evening. The image is kept in the house generally for a week, sometimes longer. When it is decided to part with it, a lamp is waved round its head and some curds are put in one of its hands. It is seated in a flower decked palanquin and carried to the side of a lake or river. The men follow the palanquin, calling out the god's name as they go. On reaching the water edge, they take from the palanquin the image and put it on the ground. For the last time they wave a lighted

lamp round its face and put it into the water, sorrowing that they will not see Ganpati again for another year.

*Bhadrapad Panchami* or Bhadrapad Fifth, is the day following Ganpati's birthday and is sacred to the Great Bear. According to the Hindus, that constellation is composed of seven sages, known as the Sapta Rishi. This festival is observed by women only.

*Gauri Navami* falls on the ninth of the bright half of Bhadrapad, five days after Ganpati's birthday. On it the ladies hold a feast in honour of his mother, Gauri or Parvati. An elderly married woman wraps one or two balsam plants in a silk *pitambar* or waistcloth. She then puts the bundle in a young girl's arms. The girl takes with her a boy and goes through the house, the boy ringing a bell as he goes. In each room a woman waves a lighted lamp round the girl's face and calls "Lakshmi, Lakshmi, have you come?" The girl replies, "I have come." The woman asks, "What have you brought?" The girl says, "Horses, elephants, armies and treasure enough to fill your house and the city." In this way boy and girl go through every room in the house, bringing to it good luck. That evening there is a feast and two days later a servant throws the balsam plants into the nearest pond or stream.

*Waman Dvadashi* falls on the twelfth day of the bright half of Bhadrapad. It is sacred to Waman, the fifth incarnation of the god Vishnu.

The story runs that the god Vishnu took the form of Waman or a dwarf to prevent the great and noble king Bali from acquiring by his merits the three worlds. The dwarf, disguised as a Brahman, presented himself at Bali's court and defeated all the local Brahmans in his exposition of the scripture. King Bali was so pleased that he told the dwarf to ask for a boon. Waman asked for as much land as he could cover in three strides. So tiny was the dwarf that Bali laughingly consented ; but the dwarf suddenly became a giant. In one stride he covered the earth, with his second he covered the heavens, with his third stride he stamped Bali into *Patal* or the lower regions.

*Pitri Paksba*, or All Saints' Day, falls on the second of the dark half of Bhadrapad. It is sacred to the spirits of the householder's ancestors.

*Navaratra* and *Dasara*.—The Navaratra, as its name implies, lasts nine days. It falls on the first day of the bright half of the month of Ashwin. The nine days are sacred to the goddess Parvati. This festival has a great vogue in Bengal, where Parvati is honoured under the name of Durga. In the Deccan, however, little attention is paid to the Navaratra. The Dasara, the tenth day of the bright half of Ashwin, is far more important. It is believed to be the anniversary of Ramachandra's start southwards to conquer Ravan. It is greatly honoured by the Rajput clans ; but it also finds favour with the Deccan Brahmans. On the ~~Dasara~~ festival the Peshwa used to invest his generals with distant and often unconquered provinces and

thereafter the Maratha armies would take the field. By a curious turn of fortune the Dasara festival is celebrated by the Government of Bombay. They altered the date of the Dasara Darbar to the anniversary of the royal birthday and every year the nobles of the Deccan in the Sardars' Darbar still celebrate, often unknown to themselves, the anniversary of the march on Lanka.

In memory of Arjuna, one of the heroes of the Mahabharata, who on Dasara day used to wash his horses' feet, put garlands round their necks and pat them, all those who have horses order their grooms to bring them to the front door. The horses come up with garlands round their necks, daubs of colour on their coats and shawls on their backs. A married lady waves a lighted lamp round each horse's head, rubs its forehead with red powder and rice and gives it sugar to eat. Lastly she lays some betelnut, a cocoanut and a silver coin at its feet.

In the evening the *Shami* tree, or *Mimosa sumu*, is worshipped, partly because the five Pandava\* brothers hid their weapons in a *Shami* tree before entering Viratanagar, wherein they spent their year of disguise, and partly because of the old legend that connects the tree with Raghu, the ancestor of Ramachandra. Raghu was anxious to make a gift to the sage Kautsa; but he had no money from which

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\* The Pandava brothers and their wife Draupadi are the heroes of the Mahabharata. For a full account of shami tree worship see *The Tale of the Tulsi plant* (Taraporevala & Co.).

to make it. In despair he resolved to raid Amaravati, the god Indra's paradise. Indra, terrified at the thought of losing his treasures, showered gold on a giant *shami* tree, that stood in the palace garden at Ayodhya. With this gold Raghu paid off Kautsa and Amaravati was saved. After worshipping the *shami* tree, the householder strips off its branches and leaves and mixes them with *apta* leaves, sesamum flowers, earth and bajri ears. He offers them to the god Ganpati, who, it is said, turns them into gold. They are then taken to Parvati's temple and offered to her in commemoration of her victory over the buffalo-headed demon, Mahishasur.

*Diwali.* Eighteen days after Dasara is held the Diwali festival. It lasts four days, that is to say, it includes the 14th and the Amavasya, or the dark half, of Ashvin and the first and second of the bright half of Kartik. It is the *diva* or lamp festival and commemorates the god Vishnu's victory over the demon Sariki. It is a great time for the children ; for they let off crackers under everybody's feet and no one thinks of objecting.

The third day of Diwali, *i.e.*, the first day of the bright half of Kartik, is really sacred to Bali, the king whom Vishnu conquered in his Waman incarnation. At 1 A.M., a servant rises, sweeps the house, collects the sweepings in a basket, puts in the basket an old broom and four copper coins and waves the basket in front of each room,





**Bhaubij.**

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repeating as he does so, an old rhyme :

*Ida, pida jawo,*

*Baliebe .raj yevo.*

(Fly away, trouble and pain,

Bali's Kingdom come again !")

As the servant repeats the rhyme a woman walks behind him and pushes him out of the door. He lays the sweepings by the roadside, returns and bathes. All the senior members of the house bathe also ; and then comes the big event of the day. When Vishnu stamped Bali into Hell, he felt some pity for the great king, whom he had overthrown. He therefore promised him that once a year his own worshippers should do Bali reverence. The first of Kartik is the appointed day. The head of the house takes a metal image of Bali astride a horse. He dresses the image and sets it on a high stool with twenty-one brass lamps round it. At dawn he sets the god in front of the house, and the household let off fireworks, play games of chance and distribute money to mendicant Brahmans and others.

On the fourth day of Divali or *Yamadvitiya* (Yama's Second) the god of Death, Yama, is honoured. On this day Yama visited his sister, the river Yamuna. She won from him at play the promise that no man, who on this day visited his sister and exchanged presents with her, would go to Hell. Brothers therefore visit their sisters. The brother gives his sister a small money present. The sister returns the courtesy by giving the brother a silk *pitambar* or waistcloth and a dinner. The day is also known as Bhaubij or the Brother's Second.



*Dip Pornima*, or the Lamp Full Moon, is the full moon of Kartik. It is held in honour of the god Shiva. On this day he conquered the gigantic demon Tripurasur. This demon owned one golden, one silver and one iron city. He grew so powerful that he defeated Indra and the lesser gods and drove them out of their palaces. They appealed to Shiva, who came to their help. He made the earth his car, the sun and moon its wheels, the Himalaya his bow, Vasuki, the serpent king, his bowstring and Vishnu his quiver. With this extraordinary armoury he was able to overthrow Tripurasur. On this day lights are placed in the *dipamalas*, or stone lamp stands, and little earthen oil lamps are lit and sent to float on the temple ponds.

The *Makarasankrant*, or winter solstice, falls, according to Hindu reckoning, on the fourteenth of January and not on the twenty-first of December. The sun turns northwards towards the Ecliptic, entering the sign of *Makara* or Capricorn. The six northing, or *uttarayana*, months, which are deemed lucky months, now begin. Heaven's gates open wide and the spirits of the dead, who have been waiting during the southing, or *dakshinayana*, months are allowed to enter. The great feature of this festival is the distribution of packets of *tilgul* or sugared sesamum. As each one gives the packet he repeats "*Tilsa ghya, godsa bola*" (Take the sesamum and speak sweetly). Packets of sugared sesamum are now sent by post together with cards similar to Christmas cards.

*Mahashivaratri*, or Shiva's Great Fourteenth, falls on the fourteenth day of the dark half of Magh. The tale runs that a wicked hunter was overtaken by night in the woods. He was treed by wild beasts and, as a punishment for his sin, would actually have been devoured by them. To pass the night, he kept plucking leaves of the sacred *bel* tree. He let them fall on a 'linga' of Shiva, that happened to lie just beneath him. This act of devotion, involuntary although it was, so pleased the great god, that he saved the hunter and carried him off to Kailas. It is also the day on which Vetāl, the king of the ghosts, is honoured by his worshippers. They are chiefly low castes and wrestlers. All night Vetāl rides round Poona city. Should any wayfarer meet him, and boldly ask the ghost-king a favour, it will instantly be granted to him.

*Holi* or *Shimga* falls on the Full Moon of the month of Phalgun. It is the opening feast of the cultivator's new year of work. The chief incident in its celebration is the squitting of red coloured water by friends over each other's white clothes.



## CHAPTER VIII

### HOW THE BRAHMAN GENTLEMAN SPENDS HIS DAY.

The Brahman gentleman's day is far more occupied with religious ceremonial than that of the Englishman; yet it is astonishing how familiarity with the ceremonial enables the Brahman to perform it, without any excessive expenditure of time.

The first thing a Brahman or Prabhu gentleman does on waking is to look at a gold or diamond ring, a piece of sandalwood or a drum. He next rubs together the palms of his hands and looks at them; for in them dwell the god Govind or Vishnu and the goddesses Laxmi and Saraswati. Next he looks at the floor and bows to it; for the floor is the earth and the earth is the spouse of Vishnu. He gets out of bed, plants carefully on the floor, first his right foot and then his left, apologizing as he does so for walking on the goddess. Next he visits and bows to his household gods, his parents, his religious teacher, the sun, the tulsi or basil plant and the cow. He closes his worship by reciting certain verses in praise of learning called the *Brahmayadna*, and by offering water to his dead ancestors up to three degrees. This payment of the debt of respect due to his ancestors is said to remind him of his money debts to the living. Lastly he has a light meal of milk, coffee and tea.

After this first breakfast the Brahman has a bath and then goes to his god-room to worship the housegods. They are generally small images of Ganpati, of Vishnu in the form of a shaligram stone and of Mahadev or Shiva in the form of a ling. The Brahman mounts a low stool, his right foot first. He sits on it and repeats sacred verses rubbing ashes between the palms of his hands, on his face, throat, arms, shoulders, elbows, ears, eyes and head. He washes his hands and ties his topknot. He says his sandhyas or morning and evening prayers, sips water and holding his breath, thinks of the Gayatri verse, the mystic appeal to the Sun-god, taught him on entering manhood. He repeats it ten times under his breath. Thereafter he worships the gods in various ways, bathing them with milk, curds, butter, honey and sugar, washing and drying them and laying before them fresh flowers. He offers them cooked food and water and prays to them to accept his offering. He waves a lighted butter lamp; and with a few flowers in his open hands, he stands behind the low stool on which he has been sitting and repeats sacred verses. He lays flowers on the heads of the gods, walks round the room, bows and withdraws.

When his worship is over, he marks his own brow with a *tilak* or sect mark, and sits in his office, working until eleven. If, however, the Brahman is a clerk in a Government office or in private service, he has to rise early and do the marketing. Wives in India never do the market-

ing, so the husbands or the servants have to buy whatever is needed in the house. When it is time for early dinner or late breakfast, the Brahman bathes, worships the gods, and prays for ten minutes.

A Brahman lady rises before her husband, bows to the basil plant and the sun, washes and repeats sacred verses. She gives her orders to her cook, who is usually a man, and to the maid-servants ; thereafter she has her hair combed and takes her bath. After her bath she puts on a fresh robe and usually reads a chapter from some sacred Marathi book. She superintends the cooking of the midday meal and when the men have begun to eat, she dines in a separate room. When her meal is over she generally lies down. About five p.m. she visits a temple for a few minutes ; on her return she looks after the cooking of the evening meal.

Until a child is five years old, it usually is let run naked about the house ; but after a boy's fifth birthday, he begins to lead a more regular life. He is called about six a.m., his face is washed and he is taught to say prayers to the sun and other gods and to bow to them. About seven a.m. he has a dish of rice porridge and some bread and milk. At eight or nine he has a warm bath and has breakfast about noon. After breakfast he is put to bed for a couple of hours ; when he wakes, he is given some sweetmeats, bread and milk or tea. At four he is taken out for an airing. He returns between five and six and after another meal of milk

and bread, he goes to bed. When he is six, he begins his lessons. As he grows older he goes to bed later and his life resembles more that of his father, save that he goes to school while his father goes to his office.

The indoor and outdoor dress of a Brahman lady consists of a robe and a bodice of cotton and silk. The robe is twenty-four to thirty-two feet long and three to four feet broad. It is passed round the waist, so as to divide it into two parts of unequal length, the longer part being left to fall as a skirt and the shorter part being drawn over the shoulders and bosom. In arranging the lower half of the robe the corner of the skirt is passed back between the feet and tucked into the waist behind, leaving in front two gracefully drooping folds of cloth, which hides the limbs nearly to the ankles. The upper part is drawn backwards over the right shoulder and the end is held in the right hand about the level of the waist. The bodice is carefully made so as to fit the chest tightly and support the breast, the ends being tied in a knot in front under the bosom. Formerly the robe or sari was drawn so as to cover the head and partly veil the face. Now the practice among well-to-do Brahman ladies is to leave the head uncovered and decorate the hair with flowers.

In the evening the Brahman performs the Vaishwadev, *i.e.*, makes the offering of rice to Agni or fire. When the first lamp is lit in the evening all rise and bow to it; the older members of the

family exchange bows ; the young people bow to their elders.

Last of all the Brahman repeats the Sandhyas or prayers which he has said in the morning. He makes his evening offerings to his gods, waves a lamp in front of their eyes to induce sleep. This is known as the *arti*. The Brahman's day is over. He takes his evening bath, has his supper and can go to bed.





